3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

285 The name *esisa* is given to the raw material as well as to the mat. The worker begins by laying out the reeds on the ground, side by side; then the slender tool *utomo* is passed through the reeds near their ends. This position is made permanent by sewing, and the process is repeated at intervals along the length of the reeds (Plate XLII, Figs. 1, 2).

Evinda is a large mat, about 120 cm long and 20 cm wide, while each strip of coarse elephant grass is about 3 cm wide. Ability to make the rush mat (*esisa*) is fairly common, but skill in making *evinda* is less usual. The mat *evinda* has several uses; it may be stretched on the floor or bed as a sleeping mat, or possibly it is rolled so that the ends can be fastened together; so treated it forms a cylinder which may be filled with grain when stood upright on the ground. A number of these mats is sometimes used to form a temporary storage place or shelter. The technique is of the twilled variety in which each weft passes over and under two warps.

Ocala is a coarse mat made from long stalks which are called "elephant grass" by the Boers; the agricultural term is "Napier's fodder." The long rods are white and glazed, so forming an artistic contrast to the crossbinding, which is of black bark. The technique is known as check, a term used to describe a structure in which warp and weft pass over and under each other singly.

The large mat (*ocikanga*) which is of soft texture shows neatly woven, diamond-shaped patterns of dark brown grass. The technique of this mat is of the twilled variety in which each weft passes over and then under two warps.

283 String bags, which are used for suspending gourds or hanging them over the shoulder, are made by men only. The root *osibundi*, mentioned in connection with brewing beer, is used for making string bags. Two fibers that have been teased out from the root are rolled tightly together by rubbing them between the palm and the thigh.
[462] Strong rope is sometimes made by plaiting coarse grass; this occupation is in the hands of males.

386 In basket-making the preparation of dyes is of great importance
[331] because colored strands of grass are inwoven to make named geometrical patterns (Plates IX; X). The Umbundu expression for dyeing is *oku lisa olosoco*.

Red coloring is produced by taking leaves of a plant named *esaso* and cooking them in water along with the bark of the tree *ukondo*.
[515] *Ukondo* is the "tooth brush" tree because small pieces of its wood are chewed and used for cleaning the teeth. After the grass has

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prolonged if even one boy fails to recover. One of the two youths interrogated said that in his camp there were seventy-eight boys, three of whom died. My other informant said that in his camp there were sixty-eight boys, only one of whom died. The informants agreed that the deaths were due to an epidemic of influenza and not to privations or septic conditions arising from the operation. 881

During the period of seclusion the boys are taught songs and dances used at the ceremony that celebrates the conclusion of their initiation. By privation the boys are taught the value of food and fire. Novices are beaten if they show any disrespect for their guardians, and trifling offences are severely punished. Every boy has to take from the fire a burning stick, which he holds in his hand while running between two lines of men who beat him, and if he drops the stick he has to start his run once more. The boys swear allegiance to one another. A novice thinks that he will die if he gives information to a woman or to a man who has not been initiated.

From his mother, each boy receives food in a gourd which he deposits on the bank of a river near the novices' camp. If a boy dies, a hole is bored in the gourd so that when the mother receives this she will not send more food. Each guardian has a stick which is sent to the mother of his pupil when the ceremony of initiation and seclusion is ended. If the boy has died, bark is cut from both ends of the stick before this symbol of death is sent to his parents. 763 881

When the boys come out from their camp at the conclusion of the rites one man and one woman stand on the bank of the river, and the boys pass under the legs of both the man and the woman. When the boys arrive at the village the whole population comes out to welcome them. There is a feast and beer-drinking bout on the day of return. 881

During seclusion no water is allowed for washing, and the informants laughed as they spoke of the order "wash hands," whereupon the boys merely rubbed their hands together. When the order, "wash dishes," was given the boys rubbed their platters with their hands. On the day of leaving camp the novices bathe in the river. Ablution consists of three dips, after each of which the boy stands on the bank until he is dry. [515]

For two months the boys wear strips of bark cloth. During this period all the novices must move together, but there is no objection to their leaving the village provided they do so all in one company. While wearing bark cloth the boys have each day to attend a cere- [292]

164 Deformities resulting from burns are frequent. Cooking pots [732] are unstably placed on logs which form the fire, and, in addition to this, people sleep very near the fire. There is no cerebro-spinal fever. Pneumonia is very common; the result is often fatal. Weakness of the heart is only occasional. Varicose veins are rare. There is no appendicitis.

One cannot fail to notice the prevalence of tropical ulcers among the Ovimbundu. These occur most frequently on the tibia. The [757] big sloughing ulcer makes a large hole which the native fills with clay and a pulp of leaves. Sometimes a bark is pounded to a pulp and used in this way. These ulcers are very obstinate even under skilled treatment. Often after the wound has been healed it will break out again when irritated by the slightest injury. Medical [732] opinion is divided as to the cause of these ulcers. Jiggers are a cause of deformation of the toes, which sometimes fall off or have to be amputated. Cancer is not usual in people under sixty years of age. Superficial cancer is the most common form.

• 515 Water, even when procurable, is sparingly used by the Ovimbundu. The hands and face may receive a perfunctory wash each day, but the entire body seldom receives this attention.

757 Cupping was observed on two occasions, but I think the operations were performed by the mothers of the children concerned, and not by a medicine-man. The method of using the horns or gourds is illustrated (Plate LXXXVI, Fig. 1). After incisions had been made the cups were applied. The operator sucked the pointed end of the cup, so creating a vacuum, which was maintained by pushing forward with the tip of the tongue a small ball of wax. This wax filled the hole at the pointed end of the cupping horn. The people shown in the photograph are Vachokue, but the method is the same among the Ovimbundu.

At Elende there was a sweat bath in the form of a hole in the ground containing a heap of stones. The stones are heated in a fire, then cold water is thrown over them so that steam arises to the patient, who crouches above the hole covered with a blanket.

In the Vasele country, also among the Ovimbundu at Elende, I examined corporeal incisions other than tribal marks. The explanation was to the effect that the making of cuts cured pain (Plates XXIV, Fig. 3; LXXVI, Fig. 2).

RAIN-MAKING

791 The rain-maker (*upuli*) is a medicine-man who has specialized in this function. The *upuli*, who was an Ocivokue of Ngongo, and